M T 243 252

Maize gathered before maturity is eaten raw or roasted over a low fire. The ears which are allowed to ripen on the stalk are carefully shelled, the kernels ground in a wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle, and the flour is winnowed or passed through a sieve.

M T 252 412

The mortar used to make maize flour is made from a section of a tree trunk, with a rectangular opening hollowed in the outer surface and perpendicular to the axis of the trunk. These mortars are very crude, poorly worked, and quite rudimentary. Besides these, one sometimes find others which are better made, small

M [25 415 291 ●854]

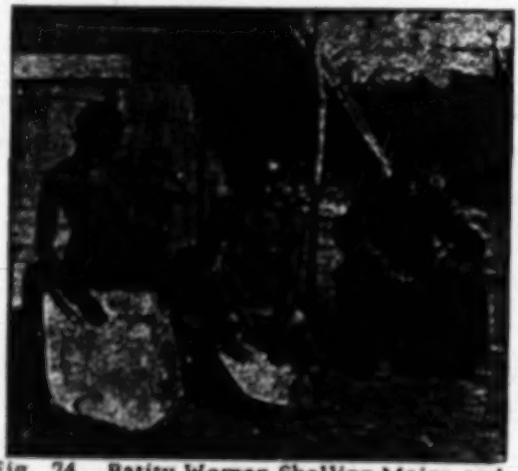

Fig. 74. Batitu Women Shelling Maize and Preparing Vegetables.

cubes provided with a lug or a liana. Let us note, however, that among the Banfumu southeast of Tua we found a mortar of similar shape which the natives used to prepare vegetables.

The sieves used for maize flour in this region are also a special type. The sides are made in an open weave. The general form resembles that of a large bottle with a square bottom, cylindrical body, constricted neck, and slightly flared rim.

M T 252

The housewife mixes the maize flour with palm oil to form a somewhat thick dough. She wraps it carefully in leaves and boils it for 10 to 15 minutes. This dish, the mokwof of the Basakata-Mosengere, is served very hot, usually seasoned a little

1: Maes--136 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32
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are worn in the hair, around the neck, on the wrists and ankles, and at the waist. 301

From Stanley Pool to Mushie, the women slip a crown of cowries into the hair, sometimes wear bracelets of brass or glass beads on the wrist and forearm, and hang brass necklaces or imported beads strung on fibers around the neck. Very often the necklace goes from the shoulders under the arm. Throughout this region, imported ornaments predominate. Only the chiefs have retained a few special ornaments from the old days, notably the necklace and bracelet of worked brass and the necklace adorned with the teeth of leopards or lions. These latter objects are associated with a privilege, a prerogative, a right of use. M T 301 554

M [301. 516 854]

Fig. 101. Group of Batitu Women. Hairdos and Ornaments.

They are, in a way, badges of rank. In the full regalia worn by [180] Natali, a typical native petty chief, each detail seemed to have a special meaning. He had donned his finest costume in our honor and to impress us: an old tunic from the Belgian Regiment of the Guides, and a government medal around his neck on a chain, the badge of a native chief recognized by the government. He had attached a small whistle to the same chain, along with the five or six medals for his wives' taxes. Over this chain he wore the necklace of the native chiefs, made of brass and T 301 554 302

T
301 decorated with worked designs. His black skin glistened with grease
554 and oil. His face had a wide red line of oil and ngula powder from
302 the tip of his nose to the top of his forehead. A large circle, white above and yellow below, was painted around his right eye. His eyelashes were very long and powdered white, while his eyebrows had been carefully plucked. His head was covered with thick hair, short and woolly. It was gathered at the back into a large chignon roll, to which was fitted a secondary coiffure in small braids, dyed with ngula and shining with grease. A long blue bead dangled below this original headdress, and a long cock feather topped off the whole thing. The
T
[304] temples and cheeks were marked with a set of light parallel lines, a tattoo which seems to be drawn with an iron comb and which is [181] characteristic of all the Banfumungu. In his left
T
[481 hand Natali held the big
293] walking staff, adorned at the top with a small iron bell, and he
M
[301
●854]

Fig. 102. A Batitu Mother and her Children, Adorned with Cowry Beads and Brass Rings.

carried a fly-chaser made from the tail of a buffalo under his right arm, the badge of a chief. This was Natali: a native chief whose ornaments indicated his authority, recognized by the state whose
T
[651] medal he possessed, a polygamist who had paid the tax on his wives as attested by the little receipt plates which hung from his neck, a sorcerer and fetisher who knew the art of making nkisi and the magic powders that striped his face.

on all the fingers of the hand. Those who can afford it even put them on their toes. Around the neck they wear fiber necklaces, from which they hang nkisi bags and horns. These amulet necklaces are associated with a religious idea, with magic power, rather than with ornamentation.

Children are usually overloaded with gaudy ornaments: white feathers stuck in the hair, necklaces and belts of glass beads, and small bells attached to the belt. In our opinion, however, these objects are not primarily intended to adorn the child, but to protect

Fig. 106. Natali, Banfumu Chief of Kapanda.

it. There is no doubt that the mother sticks the feathers in her child's hair and attaches small bells to his belt in order to find him more easily if he gets lost in the fields or in the bush. As soon as the child is old enough to find his own way and return to the village alone, bells and feathers are given up permanently. [185]

According to their ornaments, the peoples of the Stanley Pool-Kole region are divided into five groups.

583 431 to leave her husband and he, in revenge, were to lay hands on her mother or on one of the other wives of the clan. (1) [148]

1. See Chapter VI, Article VII, 4, (1), and Chapter VIII, Article II, 1.

7) Lombɛ̌: a wide shoulder strap made of fur or braided [824] bɛkombɛ reeds (Calamus sp.), though valuables of equal worth (one knife or a konga) may be given. Nowadays this boéngo consists of 2 or 3 rings; it goes to the mother in compensation for the wearying burden of carrying and nursing her daughter. (1)

1. Note that when a mother-in-law brings a child into the world, her son-in-law sends her a shoulder strap of liengé otterskin or a konga of equivalent value. He does not repeat this gift at each birth, however.

[854] 8) Betɔ̃tswā bya̋ nkwā: leaves of the bonkongé bush used to remove, wipe off, and carry away (tɔ̃ta) a child's excrement. This boéngo consists of a ring and goes to the mother as compensation for her performance of these tasks. In the absence of the mother, it is claimed by another of the father's wives or by a female relative of the mother.

[224] 9) The bojāngā, "hunting net," is demanded in many villages for no special reason. Certain clans, however, scoffed at by others because they have few members, officially ask a man belonging to one of the latter and wishing to marry one of their daughters to bring a net, saying: "You make fun of us because we have no people; bring us a hunting net to surround and enclose us, since we are not many." Thus the village of Boyela of the Bakāala, never gives one of its members in marriage without this boéngo.

[184] 10) Wɛ̌ngé w'ā̋ɛkɛ́: a boéngo which is not known everywhere but which is customary in certain groups, for example among the Bakāala. One of the woman's relatives takes a piece of a young thorny trunk of the wɛ̌ngé tree. Having scraped one end of it, he holds this

853 an ordeal or ask a magician's judgment or a magical practice to
837 reveal the culprit. The culprit who is discovered is not subject to any social sanction; he is punished by the ordeal itself or the spell cast against him.

[684] If the mother's adultery is proven through her having been caught in the act, her seducer is considered guilty. He must pay the death indemnity (20 to 30 copper rings). The woman is not at all involved as far as society is concerned; it is a matter between her and her husband.

In order to prevent any harmful effect on the child, the
751 Nkundó resort to a potion called bondandota, which will be ex-
● 854 plained in [479] the next article, 3. "Medication" by scarfication might also be mentioned. This therapy is applied to the parents as well as to the child. If the father is wealthy, he invites the wife's family to come and perform the operation themselves. As in all comparable situations, the invitation is accompanied by the handing over of a pledge, and farewell presents (belingako) are given at the end of the visit. In addition the wife very often goes to live with her parents for some time after her seclusion in order to increase the efficacy of the treatment.

The sanction incurred for a violation of the secondary
843 stipulations is less serious. For instance, the pregnant woman suffers
[684] from violent migraines, which often cause fainting and sometimes make delivery very difficult; thus they can even cause death. The husband is seldom bothered by these headaches. But he takes great pains to faithfully observe the law in order to spare his wife such painful consequences and to avoid the death of the child being born.

Apart from sexual abstention and the rules connected with it, the couple are also subject to various prohibitions which are clearly based on superstitious ideas. Thus:

1) They must neither go down into a well nor dig in the earth. The woman would die, for it is as if they were digging her grave.

2) They must not carry anything together with another person, for that is how corpses are carried, and such carrying would be the cause of death, through imitation of the woman's funeral procession.

846 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precau-
789 tion is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's birth and does not return till after the delivery

We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's
846 misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's
837 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of baóngó b'ábé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible
[826] conduct, and they say that the bondandota potion is administered to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad knees. (1)

1. The expression baóngó b'ábé is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often
753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they
●954 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the father no longer touches the child. [492]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peo-
837 ples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent
834 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the
749 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's pregnancy. For the wife the bokeka remains strict with respect to illicit relations until the child is weaned. However she, too, may regain her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The in-
[824] gredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped up by means of bolaká (resin from the Symphonia gabonensis). The interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

853 may not eat meat if the child is male, or fish if it is female, un-
262 til the child in question is grown and kills either an animal (or bird) or a fish, according to the case, and has given it to the victim of the accident. If the child dies young, the person is accused of having violated the prohibition and is obliged to pay a large indemnity. This extremity is not usually reached, however, for the one to whom the accident has befallen scrupulously keeps away from everything that might cause this sort of murder. Then, if death occurs and he has nothing with which to reproach himself, he can resort to an ordeal or to the verdict of a test based on superstition. In addition in villages that have Batswa, a woman of that
[863] race must nurse the child for an instant after the accident before its mother gives it her breast again. [497]

6) The child is carried on the shoulder, and as soon as it is
854 capable of holding on, on the hip. It does not take many weeks for it to become accustomed to that position. When the mother has to hold it for a long period of time (during a march, on a trip, etc.), she puts it in a scarf-shoulder strap (lombě), made from creepers that are scraped and woven as for a mat, or from a cloth of raffia fibers, or even from a pelt (nowadays it is often made from a piece of European cloth). The scarf must be sturdy, for were it to tear and the infant fall, far-reaching consequences would result; all of that woman's subsequent children would be condemned to die in the mother's womb or during the period of nursing.

As the child grows it is sometimes carried astride the mother's back, either because she does not like to be separated from it, or because the tyranny of the little one forces her to keep it with her even during her work, errands, and even dances. She remedies this awkward situation if possible by resorting to the assistance of an older girl, a young niece or cousin, or a little boy from among the immediate kin.

When the child rests during the day, it is laid on an ordinary bed or on a movable bed (boánga), without any special arrangements. It has no difficulty sleeping soundly on such hard couches.

7) Weaning. Although a child is gradually accustomed
862 to solid food, it does not stop nursing. As it grows older, the nursing times are spaced farther and farther apart. But the child

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples [824] with the sap of the lifété fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[853] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed, [563] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of [235] goat's milk is unknown.

● 854 751 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness [053] is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolóí) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litóyansombo bush and extract of mbólé (fruit of the bosoombó). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: tá tá tá.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council together. This consists not only of members of the *molembo* and *ekopo*, but of all elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged in the wrong, whether *ekopo* or *molembo*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of the *momene mokonda*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the *momene mokonda* or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *momene mokonda* (or the *molomi o ehe*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the group would assent by saying, ' Even so, grandfather '. The whole group of judges would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens: this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Batwa to put the roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited, for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three: those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the importance of the *montolo*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *montolo* he may take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins, and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The skin hat, known as *louku*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an *nkumu*, one being the *nkulupa*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the other the *iyoko*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *nkulupa* may be used by anyone, but the *iyoko* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin of the *iyoko* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *nyamba*, which is worn over one shoulder in bandoleer fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of the *iyoko* is limited to the informal hat, *louku*, and for making into the *lokoto*, a pouch used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the importance of the *montolo* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*, which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bonginda *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bonginda *nkumu* never wash their heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly inconvenienced, one of his wives may delouse his head, but only within the privacy of the house, by the light that enters the rear opening.